

AGRICULTURE

SB327/HB777 – Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation – Easement Termination

These bills are designed to address the possible termination of a Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) easement after having been in the program for 25 years. SB327/HB777 require MALPF to provide landowners with the opportunity for a hearing prior to making a termination decision; the bills also establish an appeals process for landowners applying for easement termination. The easement is perpetual if the Board of Public Works approves the purchase by MALPF on or after October 1, 2004.

SB367/HB770 – Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation – Tenant Houses – Construction

These bills provide that any construction of tenant houses on land subject to an easement is subject to MALPF approval. In addition, the bills authorize MALPF to grant an exception, based on a showing of compelling need, to the number of tenant houses allowed to be constructed under current law (one house per 100 acres). MALPF must adopt regulations for the size and location of tenant houses.

SB392/HB755 – Young Farmers Advisory Board

These bills establish a 12-member Young Farmers Advisory Board within MDA, including a member from within DNR's Forestry program. Among other purposes, this advisory board is to communicate the importance of young and beginning farmers to agriculture in the State; identify and address issues relating to young and beginning farmers and make recommendations to the Maryland Agricultural Commission; and establish committees, as necessary, to develop projects relating to the aspects of life for young and beginning farmers.

HB164 – Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation

On written application, MALPF must release, free from easement restrictions and only for the landowner who originally sold an easement, one acre or less for the purpose of constructing a dwelling house for the use of that landowner or the landowner's child. HB164 allows MALPF some level of review by providing that a release must include a statement that the lot of the owner or owner's child may not be transferred for five years from the date of the final release, unless approved by MALPF or unless a lender notifies MALPF of a transfer pursuant to a bona fide foreclosure of a mortgage, deed of trust, or a deed in lieu of foreclosure.

HB606 – Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program – Installment Purchase Agreements, Schedule of Installments, and Termination of Easements

HB606 authorizes MALPF to purchase an easement using an installment purchase agreement (IPA) with a maximum term of 15 years. Easements purchased using an IPA are not subject to termination at the request of the landowner. The bill also requires MALPF, in consultation with the State Treasurer, to prepare a plan to purchase easements using IPAs with a term of 25 years. The plan, which must be presented to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1, 2004, must identify a revenue source to be dedicated to the purchase of easements using IPAs.

HB625 – Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation – Grants – Installment Purchase Programs

This bill authorizes MALPF to provide grants to counties with approved IPA programs for the purchase of easements using such agreements. The bill establishes conditions for MALPF approval of a program and provides that easements purchased using a grant are perpetual and held jointly by the county and MALPF.